GEMS FROM BHAGAVAN

A necklace of sayings by
BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI
on various vital subjects

Strung together by
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Day by day with Bhagavan

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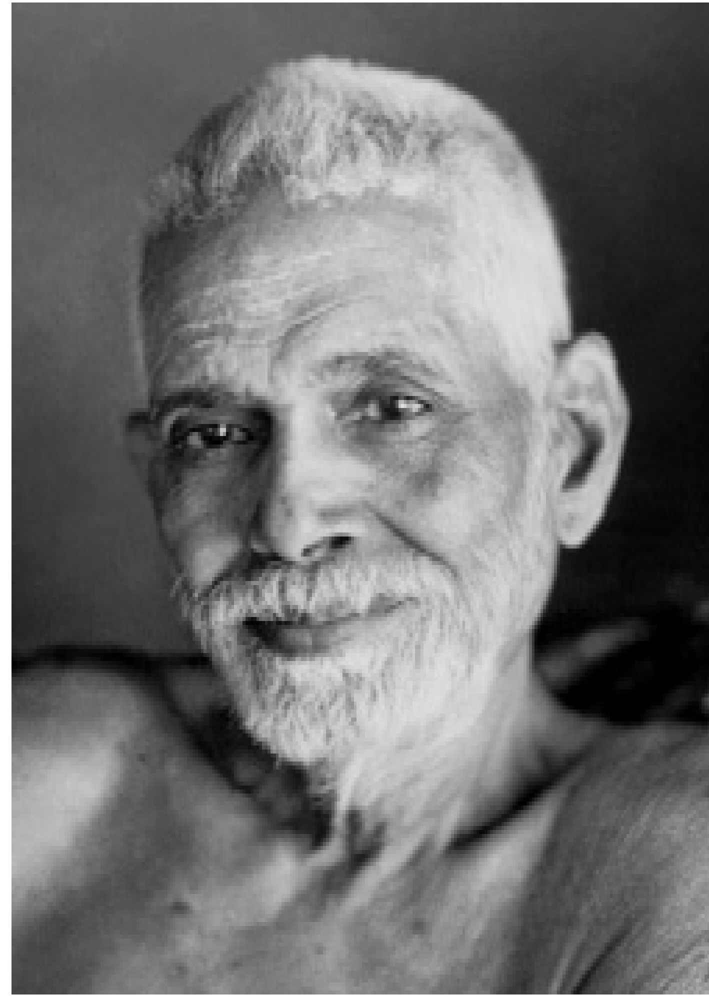
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PREFACE

I have been, for some time now, seriously considering that a book containing, within a small compass, all the most important of Bhagavan's teachings would be a real desideratum, and if I seek to supply it in my own way, according to my light and to the best of my ability, the small service I thereby render may be of use to readers in general, and Bhagavan's devotees in particular. It may even be acceptable to Bhagavan as His child's efforts to do something good and useful. This is my only excuse for this book.

A. DEVARAJA MUDALIAR



Sri Ramana Maharshi

pains and pleasures are not due to facts but to our concepts.

Two young men of a village went on a pilgrimage to North India. One of them died there. But the other having picked up some job decided to return to his village only after some time. Meanwhile he came across a wandering pilgrim and sent word through him to his village about himself and his dead friend. The pilgrim conveyed the news and in doing so inadvertently changed the names of the living and the dead man. The result was that the dead man's people were rejoicing that he was doing well and the living man's people were in grief that he was dead.

I used to sit on the floor and lie on the ground. No cloth spread out. That is freedom. The sofa is a bondage. It is jail for me. I am not allowed to sit where and how I please. Is it not bondage? One must be free to do as one pleases and should not be served by others. 'No want' is the greatest bliss. It can be realized only by experience. Even an emperor is no match for a man with no wants.

II

I

HAPPINESS

All beings desire happiness always, happiness without a tinge of sorrow. At the same time everybody loves himself best. The cause for love is only happiness. So, that happiness must lie within oneself. Further, that happiness is daily experienced by everyone in sleep when there is no mind. To attain that natural happiness one must know oneself. For that, Self-enquiry, 'Who am I?' is the chief means.

Happiness is the nature of the Self. They are not different. The only happiness there is, is of the Self. That is the truth. There is no happiness in worldly objects. Because of our ignorance we imagine we derive happiness from them.

If, as a man generally imagines, his happiness is due to external causes, it is reasonable to conclude that his happiness must increase with the increase of possessions and diminish in proportion to their diminution. Therefore, if he is devoid of possessions his happiness should be nil. What, however, is the real experience of man? Does it confirm this view? In deep sleep the man is devoid of all possessions, including his own body. Instead of being unhappy he is quite happy. Everyone desires to sleep soundly. The conclusion therefore is that happiness is inherent in man and is not due to external causes. One must realize his Self in order to open the store of unalloyed happiness.

There is a story in *Panchadasi*, which illustrates that our

you see depends on the seer. Apart from the seer there is no seen.' This is called *drishti-srishti vada*, or the argument that one first creates out of his mind and then sees what his mind itself has created.

To those who cannot grasp even this and who further argue, 'The dream experience is so short, while the world always exists. The dream experience was limited to me. But the world is felt and seen not only by me but by so many and we cannot call such a world nonexistent,' the argument called *srishti-drishti vada* is addressed and they are told, 'God first created such and such a thing out of such and such an element and then something else and so forth.' That alone will satisfy them. Their minds are not otherwise satisfied and they ask themselves, 'How can all geography, all maps, all sciences, stars, planets and the rules governing or relating to them, and all knowledge be totally untrue?' To such it is best to say, 'Yes. God created all this and so you see it.' All these are only to suit the capacity of the hearers. The absolute can only be one.

There is first the white light, so to call it, of the Self, which transcends both light and darkness. In it no object can be seen. There is neither seer nor seen. Then there is also total darkness (*avidya*) in which no objects are seen. But from the Self proceeds a reflected light, the light of pure mind (*manas*), and it is this light which gives room for the existence of all the film of the world, which is seen neither in total light nor in total darkness, but only in the subdued or reflected light.

From the point of view of *Jnana* (Knowledge) or the Reality, the pain seen in the world is certainly a dream, as

THE SELF AND NON-SELF: THE REALITY AND THE WORLD

Existence or Consciousness is the only reality. Consciousness plus waking we call waking. Consciousness plus sleep we call sleep. Consciousness plus dream we call dream. Consciousness is the screen on which all the pictures come and go. The screen is real, the pictures are mere shadows on it.

The Self and the appearances therein, as the snake in the rope, can be well illustrated like this. There is a screen. On that screen first appears the figure of a king. He sits on a throne. Then before him on that same screen a play begins with various figures and objects, and the king on the screen watches the play on the same screen. The seer and the seen are mere shadows on the screen which is the only reality, supporting all the pictures. In the world also, the seer and the seen together constitute the mind, and the mind is supported by or based on the Self.

The *ajata* school of *Advaita* says, 'Nothing exists except the one reality. There is no birth or death, no projection or drawing in, no *sadhaka* (aspirant), no *mumukshu* (one who desires to be liberated), no *mukta* (one who is liberated), no bondage, no liberation. The One Unity alone exists forever.' To those who find it difficult to grasp this truth and ask, 'How can we ignore this solid world we see all around us?' the dream experience is pointed out and they are told, 'All that

six questions on *maya*. They are instructive:

1. What is *maya*? The answer is: It is *anirvachaniya* or indescribable.

2. To whom does it come? The answer is: To the mind or ego who feels that he is a separate entity, who thinks 'I do this' or 'This is mine'.

3. Where does it come from and how did it originate? The answer: Nobody can say.

4. How did it arise? The answer is: Through *non-vichara*, through failure to enquire 'Who am I?'

5. If the Self and *maya* both exist, does this not invalidate the theory of *Advaita*? The answer is: It need not, since *maya* is dependent on the Self as the picture is on the screen. The picture is not real in the sense that the screen is real.

6. If the Self and *maya* are one, could it not be argued that the Self is of the nature of *maya* and that it is also illusory? The answer is: No, the Self can be capable of producing illusion without being illusory. A conjuror may create for our entertainment the illusion of people, animals and things, and we see all of them as clearly as we see him, but after the performance he alone remains and all the visions he created have disappeared. He is not a part of the vision but solid and real.

The books use the following illustration to help explain creation: The Self is like the canvas for a painting. First a paste is smeared over it to close the small holes that are in the canvas. This paste can be compared to the *Antaryamin* (Indweller) in all creation. Then the artist makes an outline on the canvas. is the world, of which any particular pain like hunger is an infinitesimal part. In the dream also you yourself feel hunger. You see others suffering from hunger. You feed yourself, and moved by pity feed the others whom you find suffering from hunger. So long as the dream lasted, all those pains were as real as you now think the pain in the world to be. It was only when you woke up that you discovered that the pain in the dream was unreal. You might have eaten to the full and gone to sleep. You dream that you work hard and long in the hot sun all day, are tired and hungry and want to eat a lot. Then you wake up and find your stomach is full and you have not stirred out of your bed. But this does not mean that while you are in the dream you can act as if the pain you feel is not real. The hunger in the dream has to be assuaged by the food in the dream. The fellow beings you found so hungry in the dream had to be provided with food in that dream. You can never mix up the two states, the dream and the waking state. Till you reach the state of *jnana* and thus wake out of *maya* you must do social service by relieving suffering whenever you see it. But even then you must do it without *ahankara, i.e.*, without the sense of 'I am the doer', but with the feeling 'I am the Lord's tool'. Similarly one must not be conceited by thinking, 'I am helping a man below me. He needs help. I am in a position to help. I am superior and he inferior.' But you must help the man as a means of worshipping God in that man. All such service is for the Self and not for anybody else. You are not helping anybody else, but only yourself.

The book *Kaivalya Navaneeta* has asked and answered

nothing, there is always the light of Consciousness or Self, like the hall lamp which is always burning. The thing to do is to concentrate on the seer and not on the seen, not on the objects, but on the Light which reveals them.

Questions about the reality of the world, and about the existence of pain or evil in the world, will all cease when you enquire 'Who am I?' and find out the seer. Without a seer the world and the evils thereof alleged do not exist.

The world is of the form of the five categories of sense objects, and nothing else. These five kinds of objects are sensed by the five senses. As all are perceived by the mind through these five senses, the world is nothing but the mind. Is there a world apart from the mind?

Though the world and consciousness emerge and disappear together, the world shines or is perceived only through consciousness. That source wherein both these arise and disappear, and which itself neither appears nor disappears, is the perfect Reality.

If the mind, the source of all knowledge and activity subsides, the vision of the world will cease. Just as knowledge of the real rope does not dawn till the fancied notion of the serpent disappears, vision (experience) of the Reality cannot be gained unless the superimposed vision of the universe is abandoned.

That which really exists is only the Self. The world, *jiva* (individual self) and *Iswara* (God) are mental creations, like the appearance of silver in mother of pearl. All these appear at the same time and disappear similarly. The Self alone is the

This can be compared to the *sukshma sarira* (subtle body) of all creatures; for instance, the light and sound (*bindu* and *nada*) out of which all things arise. Within this outline the artist paints his picture with colours, etc., and this can be compared to the gross forms that constitute the world.

Vedanta says that the cosmos springs into view simultaneously with the seer. There is no creation by stages or steps. It is similar to the creation in dream where the experiencer and the objects of experience come into existence at the same time. To those who are not satisfied with this explanation, theories of gradual creation are offered in books.

It is not at all correct to say that *advaitins* of the Sankara school deny the existence of the world, or that they call it unreal. On the other hand, it is more real to them than to others. Their world will always exist whereas the world of the other schools will have origin, growth and decay, and as such cannot be real. They only say that the world as 'world' is not real, but that the world as Brahman *is* real. All is Brahman, nothing exists but Brahman, and the world as Brahman is real.

The Self is the one Reality that always exists, and it is by the light of the Self that all other things are seen. We forget it and concentrate on the appearance. The light in the hall burns both when persons are enacting something, as in a theatre, and when nothing is being enacted. It is the light which enables us to see the hall, the persons and the acting. We are so engrossed with the objects or appearances revealed by the light, that we pay no attention to the light. In the waking or dream state in which things appear, and in the sleep state in which we see

III

MIND

Mind is a wonderful force inherent in the Self.

That which rises in this body as 'I' is the mind.

When the subtle mind emerges through the brain and the senses, the gross names and forms are cognized. When it remains in the Heart, names and forms disappear.... If the mind remains in the Heart, the 'I' or the ego which is the source of all thoughts will go, and the Self, the Real, Eternal 'I' alone will shine. Where there is not the slightest trace of the ego, there is the Self.

Mind and breath have the same source. Hence breath is controlled when mind is controlled and mind when breath is controlled. Breath is the gross form of the mind.

Pranayama (breath control) is only an aid to subdue the mind and will not serve to kill it.

Like *pranayama*, worship of a deity, *japa* (repetition) with a *mantra*, strict regulation of diet are all aids for mind control.

Control of breath (*pranayama*) may be internal or external. The internal is as follows: *Naham* (the idea I am not the body) is *rechaka* (exhalation), *Koham* (Who am I?) is *puraka* (inhalation), *Soham* (I am He) is *kumbhaka* (retention of breath). Doing this, the breath becomes automatically controlled. External *pranayama* is for one not endowed with strength to control the mind. There is no way so sure as control of mind. *Pranayama* need not be exactly as prescribed in *hatha* world, the ego and *Iswara*.

To the *jnani* it is immaterial whether the world appears or not. Whether it appears or not, his attention is always on the Self. Take the letters and the paper on which they are printed. You are wholly engrossed with the letters and have no attention left for the paper. But the *jnani* thinks only of the paper as the real substratum, whether the letters appear or not.

You make all kinds of sweets from various ingredients and in various shapes, and they all taste sweet because there is sugar in all of them, and sweetness is the nature of sugar. In the same way, all experiences and the absence of them contain the illumination, which is the nature of the Self. Without the Self they cannot be experienced, just as without sugar not one of the articles you make can taste sweet.

The Immanent Being is called *Iswara*. Immanence can only be with *maya*. It (*Iswara*) is the Knowledge of Being along with *maya*. From the subtle conceit *Hiranyagarbha* rises; from *Hiranyagarbha* the gross, concrete *Virat* rises. *Chit-Atma* is pure Being only.

As regards the existence of pain in the world, the wise one explains from his experience, that if one withdraws within the Self there is an end of all pain. The pain is felt so long as the object is different from oneself. But when the Self is found to be an undivided whole, who and what is there to feel?

The Upanishadic text 'I am Brahman' only means Brahman exists as 'I'.

separated; and it is the same with the illumination and the mind that unite to form the ego. The following illustration is given in the books: The lamp in the theatre is *Para Brahman* or illumination. It illuminates itself, the stage and the actors. We see the stage and the actors by its light, but the light still continues when there is no more play. Another illustration is an iron rod that is compared to the mind. Fire joins it and it becomes red hot. It glows and can burn things like fire, but still it has a definite shape unlike fire. If we hammer it, it is the rod that receives the blow, not the fire. The rod is the *jivatman*, the fire the Self or *Paramatman*. The mind can do nothing by itself. It emerges only with the illumination and can do no action good or bad, except with the illumination. But while the illumination is always there, enabling the mind to act well or ill, the pleasure or pain resulting from such action is not felt by the illumination, just as when you hammer a red hot iron it is not the fire but the iron that gets the hammering.

If we control the mind, it does not matter where we live.

IV

Bhagavan pointed to his towel and said, 'We call this a white cloth, but the cloth and its whiteness cannot be

yoga. If engaged in *japa, dhyana* (meditation), *bhakti*, etc., just a little control of breath will suffice to control the mind. The mind is the rider and breath the horse. *Pranayama* is a check on the horse. By that check the rider is checked. *Pranayama* may be done just a little. To watch the breath is one way of doing it. The mind is drawn away from other activities by being engaged in watching the breath. That controls the breath, and the mind in its turn is also controlled. If *rechaka* and *puraka* are found difficult to practise, retention of breath alone for a short while may be practised while in *japa, dhyana*, etc. That too will yield good results.

There is no other way of controlling the mind except as prescribed in the books like the *Gita*, drawing in the mind as often as it strays or goes outward, and fixing it in the Self. Of course it will not be easy to do it. It will come only with practice or *sadhana*.

God illumines the mind and shines within it. One cannot know God by means of the mind. One can but turn the mind inwards and merge it in God.

The body composed of insentient matter cannot say 'I' (*i.e.*, cannot be the cause of the 'I- thought'). On the other hand, the Eternal Consciousness cannot have such a thing as birth. Between the two something arises within the dimensions of the body. This is the knot of matter and Consciousness (*chit-jada-granthi*), variously called bondage, *jiva*, subtle body, ego, *samsara* (attachment), mind, etc.

Bhagavan pointed to his towel and said, 'We call this a white cloth, but the cloth and its whiteness cannot be

pursue meditation of Self. He is then sure to succeed.

If the ego is present, all else will also exist. If it is absent, all else will also vanish. As ego is all this, to enquire what this ego is, is to give up all attachment.

Controlling speech and breath, and diving deep within oneself, as a man dives into water to recover something that has fallen there, one must find out the source whence the ego rises, by means of keen insight.

Enquiry, which constitutes the path of *jnana*, consists not in orally repeating 'I' 'I', but in searching by means of a deeply introverted mind wherefrom the 'I' springs. To think 'I am not this' or 'I am that' may be of help in the enquiry, but cannot be the actual enquiry.

When we quest within our mind 'Who am I?' and reach the Heart, 'I' topples down and immediately another entity will reveal itself proclaiming 'I-I'. Even though it also emerges saying 'I', it does not connote the ego, but the One Perfect Existence.

If we unceasingly investigate the form of the mind, we find there is no such thing as the mind. This is the direct path open to all.

Thoughts alone constitute the mind, and for all thoughts the base or source is the 'I-thought'. 'I' is the mind. If we go inward questing for the source of the 'I', the 'I' topples down. This is the *jnana* enquiry.

Where the 'I' merges, another entity emerges as 'I-I' of its own accord. That is the Perfect Self.

There is no use removing doubts. If we clear one doubt

"WHO AM I?" - ENQUIRY

For all thoughts the source is the 'I-thought'. The mind will merge only by Self-enquiry 'Who am I?' The thought 'Who am l?' will destroy all other thoughts and finally kill itself also. If other thoughts arise, without trying to complete them, one must enquire to whom did this thought arise. What does it matter how many thoughts arise? As each thought arises one must be watchful and ask to whom is this thought occurring. The answer will be 'to me'. If you enquire 'Who am I?' the mind will return to its source (or where it issued from). The thought which arose will also submerge. As you practise like this more and more, the power of the mind to remain at its source is increased.

By means of a moderate quantity of *satvic* (pure) food, which is superior to all other rules and regulations of self discipline, the *satvic* or pure quality of the mind will grow and Self-enquiry will be helped.

Though ancient and timeless sense attachments in the shape of *vasanas* (subtle tendencies) may rise countless like the waves of the sea, they will all be destroyed as *dhyana* progresses. Without giving any room for doubt whether it would at all be possible to eradicate all those *vasanas* and be the Self alone, one must take hold ceaselessly of *dhyana* of the Self. However great a sinner one may be, instead of lamenting 'I am a great sinner, how can I make any progress?' one must completely forget the fact of being a sinner and earnestly

policeman. He will go with you and pretend to catch the thief, but nothing will be gained. So you must turn inward, and see from whence the mind rises and then it will cease to exist.

Breath and mind arise from the same source and when one of them is controlled the other is also controlled. As a matter of fact, in the quest method - which is more correctly 'Whence am I?' and not merely 'Who am I?' - we are not simply trying to eliminate, saying 'We are not the body, nor the senses and so on', to reach what remains as the ultimate reality, but we are trying to find out whence the 'I-thought' or the ego arises within us. The method contains within it, though implicitly and not expressly, the watching of the breath. When we watch wherefrom the 'I-thought' arises, we are necessarily watching the source of breath also, as the 'I-thought' and the breath arise from the same source.

Breath control may do as an aid but can never by itself lead to the goal. While doing it mechanically, take care to be alert in mind and to remember the 'I- thought' and the quest for its source. Then you will find that where the breath sinks, there the 'I-thought' arises. They sink and arise together. The

'I-thought' will also sink along with the breath. Simultaneously another luminous and infinite 'I-I' will emerge, and it will be continuous and unbroken. That is the goal. It goes by different names - God, Self, *Kundalini, Shakti*, Consciousness, etc.

Who am I?' is not a mantra. It means that you must find out where in you the 'I-thought' arises, which is the source of all other thoughts. But if you find that *vichara marga* (path another arises and there will be no end of doubts. All doubts will cease only when the doubter and his source have been found. Seek for the source of the doubter, and you find he is really nonexistent. Doubter ceasing, doubts will cease.

Reality being yourself, there is nothing for you to realize. All are regarding the unreal as real. What is required is that you give up regarding the unreal as real. The object of all meditation (*dhyana*) or *japa* is only that, to give up all thoughts regarding the non-self, to give up many thoughts and to hold on to one thought. The object of all *sadhana* is to make the mind one-pointed, to concentrate it on one thought and thus exclude our many thoughts. If we do this, eventually even the one thought will go and the mind will get extinguished in its source.

When we enquire within 'Who am I?' the 'I' investigated is the ego. It is that which makes *vichara* (enquiry) also. The Self has no *vichara*. That which makes the enquiry is the ego. The 'I' about which the enquiry is made is also the ego. As the result of the enquiry the ego ceases to exist and only the Self is found to exist.

What is the best way of killing the ego? To each person that way is best which appears easiest or appeals the most. All the ways are equally good, as they lead to the same goal, which is the merging of the ego in the Self. What the *bhakta* calls surrender, the man who does *vichara* calls *jnana*. Both are trying to take the ego back to the source from which it sprang and make it merge there.

To ask the mind to kill itself is like making the thief the

be asking, ‘Where?’

Regulation of life, such as getting up at a fixed hour, bathing, doing *mantra-japa*, etc., all this is for people who do not feel drawn to Self-enquiry, or are not capable of it. But for those who can practise this method all rules and disciplines are unnecessary.

Undoubtedly it is said in some books, that one should go on cultivating one good quality after another and thus prepare for *moksha*; but for those who follow the *jnana* or *vichara marga*, their *sadhana* is itself quite enough for acquiring all *daivic* (divine) qualities; they need not do anything else.

What is *Gayatri*? It really means ‘Let me concentrate on That which illumines all’.

V

of enquiry) is too hard for you, you go on repeating ‘I-I’ and that will lead you to the same goal. There is no harm in using ‘I’ as a mantra. It is the first name of God.

I ask you to see where the ‘I’ arises in your body; but it is not really quite correct to say that the ‘I’ rises from and merges in the Heart on the right side of the chest. The Heart is another name for the Reality, and it is neither inside nor outside the body. There can be no in and out for it, since It alone is. I do not mean by ‘Heart’ any physiological organ, any plexus of nerves or anything like that, but so long as one identifies oneself with the body and thinks he is the body, he is advised to see in the body where the ‘I-thought’ rises and merges again. It must be the Heart at the right side of the chest, since every man of whatever race and religion and in whatever language he may be saying ‘I’, points to the right side of his chest to indicate himself. This is true all over the world. So that must be the place. And by keenly watching the emergence of the ‘I-thought’ on waking and its subsiding in sleep, one can see that it is in the Heart on the right side.

First know who you are. This requires no *sastras* (scripture) or scholarship. This is simple experience. The state of being is *now and here* all along. You have lost hold of yourself and are asking others for guidance. The purpose of philosophy is to turn the mind inward. “If you know yourself, no evil can come to you. Because you asked me I have told you this” (see *Kaivalya Navaneeta*). The ego comes up only holding you (the Self). Hold yourself and the ego will vanish. Until then the sage will be happy saying, ‘There is’, and the ignorant will

The absence of thought is *bhakti*. It is also *mukti*.

Bhakti is *Jnana Mata*, *i.e.*, the mother of *jnana*.

It is asked, why all this creation so full of sorrow and evil. All one can say is that it is God's will, which is inscrutable. No motive, no desire, no end to achieve can be attributed to that infinite, all-wise and all-powerful Being. God is untouched by activities which take place in His presence. There is no meaning in attributing responsibility and motive to the One, before it became many. But God's will for the prescribed course of events is a good solution for the vexed question of free-will. If the mind is worried over what befalls us, or what has been committed or omitted by us, it is wise to give up the sense of responsibility and free-will, by regarding ourselves as the ordained instruments of the All-Wise and the All-Powerful, to do and suffer as He pleases. Then He bears all the burdens and gives us peace.

A Maharani told Bhagavan, 'I am blessed with everything that a human being would like to have'. Her Highness's voice choked. Controlling herself she continued slowly, 'I have all that I want, a human being may want... but... but... I do not have peace of mind. Something prevents it. Probably my destiny'. There was silence for a while. Then Bhagavan spoke in his usual sweet manner: 'All right, you have said what you wished to say. Well, what is destiny? There is no destiny. Surrender, and all will be well. Throw all responsibility on God and do not bear the burden yourself. What can destiny do to you then?'

Devotee: Surrender is impossible.

Bhagavan: Yes, complete surrender is impossible. Partial

SURRENDER

God will bear whatever burdens we put on Him. All things are being carried on by the omnipotent power of a Supreme God. Instead of submitting ourselves to It, why should we always be planning, 'We should do this or that'. Knowing that the train carries all the load, why should we, travelling therein, suffer by carrying our small bundle on our heads, instead of leaving it on the train and being happy.

The story of Ashtavakra teaches that in order to experience *Brahma Jnana* all that is necessary is to surrender yourself completely to the Guru, to give up your notion of 'I' and 'mine'. If these are surrendered, what remains is the Reality.

There are two ways of achieving surrender. One is looking into the source of the 'I' and merging into that source. The other is feeling, 'I am helpless myself, God alone is all powerful, and except by throwing myself completely on Him, there is no other means of safety for me'; and thus gradually developing the conviction that God alone exists and the ego does not count. Both methods lead to the same goal. Complete surrender is another name for *jnana* or liberation.

Bhakti is not different from *mukti*. *Bhakti* is being as the Self. One is always That. He realizes It by the means he adopts. What is *bhakti*? To think of God. That means only one thought prevails to the exclusion of all other thoughts. That thought is of God, which is the Self, or it is the self surrendered unto God. When He has taken you up, nothing else will assail you.

THE THREE STATES: WAKING, DREAM AND SLEEP

There is no difference between the dream and the waking state except that the dream is short and the waking long. Both are the result of the mind. Our real state is called *turiya*, which is beyond the waking, dream and sleep states.

The Self alone exists and remains as It is. The three states owe their existence to *avichara* (non-enquiry), and enquiry puts an end to them. However much one may explain, this fact will not become clear until one attains Self-realization, and wonders how he was blind to the self-evident and only existence for so long.

All that we see is a dream, whether we see it in the dream state or waking state. On account of some arbitrary standards about the duration of the experience and so on, we call one experience a dream and another waking experience. With reference to Reality both the experiences are unreal. A man might have an experience such as getting *anugraha* (grace) in his dream, and the effects and influence of it on his entire subsequent life may be so profound and abiding, that one cannot call it unreal - whilst calling real some trifling incident in the waking life that just flits by, which is casual, of no consequence and is soon forgotten. Once I had an experience, a vision or a dream, whatever you may call it. I and some others, including Chadwick, had a walk on the hill. Returning, we were walking along a huge street with great buildings on

surrender is certainly possible for all. In course of time that will lead to complete surrender. Well, if surrender is impossible what can be done? There is no peace of mind. You are helpless to bring it about. It can be done only by surrender.

D: Partial surrender - well, can it undo destiny?

B: Oh yes, it can.

D: Is not destiny due to past *karma*?

B: If one is surrendered to God, God will look to it.

D: That being God's dispensation, how does God undo it?

B: All are in Him only.

To a devotee who was praying that she should have more frequent visions of Siva, Bhagavan said, "Surrender to Him and abide by His Will, whether He appears or disappears; await His pleasure. If you ask Him to do as you like it is not surrender but command to God. You cannot have Him obey you and yet think you have surrendered. He knows what is best and when and how to do it. His is the burden. You have no longer any cares. All your cares are His. Such is surrender. That is *bhakti*."

VI

GRACE AND GURU

I have not said that a Guru is not necessary. But a Guru need not always be in human form. First a person thinks that he is inferior and that there is a superior, all-knowing, all powerful God who controls his own and the world's destiny and worships him or does *bhakti*. When he reaches a certain stage and becomes fit for enlightenment, the same God whom he was worshipping comes as Guru and leads him onward. That Guru comes only to tell him, 'That God is within yourself. Dive within and realize'. God, Guru and the Self are the same.

Realization is the result of the Master's (Guru's) grace, more than teachings, lectures, meditations, etc. They are only secondary aids, whereas the former is the primary and essential cause.

Guru's grace is always there. You imagine it to be something somewhere high up in the sky, far away and which has to descend. It is really inside you in your Heart, and the moment, by any of the methods, you effect subsidence or merger of the mind into its source, the grace rushes forth, spouting as from a spring from within you.

Contact with *jnanis* is good. They will work through silence. A Guru is not the physical form. Hence His contact remains even after the physical form of the Guru vanishes.

After your *bhakti* to God has matured you, God comes in the shape of a Guru and from outside pushes your mind inside, while being inside as Self He draws you there from either side. Pointing out the street and the buildings, I asked Chadwick and others, whether anybody could say that what we were seeing was a dream, and they all replied, 'Which fool will say so?' We then walked along, entered the hall and the vision or dream ceased, or I woke up. What are we to call this?

Just before waking up from sleep, there is a very brief state, free from thought. That should be made permanent.

In dreamless sleep there is no world, no ego and no unhappiness, but the Self remains. In the waking state there are all of these. Yet there is the Self. One has only to remove the transitory happenings in order to realize the ever-present beatitude of the Self.

Your nature is bliss. Find that on which all the rest are imposed and you then remain as the pure Self.

In sleep there is no space or time. They are concepts, which arise after the 'I-thought' has arisen. You are beyond time and space. The 'I-thought' is the limited 'I'. The real 'I' is unlimited, universal, beyond time and space. Just while rising from sleep and before seeing the objective world, there is a state of awareness which is your Pure Self. That must be known.

VII

self-surrender. It acts from within, because God resides in the Heart of all beings. Its whisper can be heard only in a mind purified by self-surrender and prayer.

"Rationalists laugh at it, and atheists scorn it, but it exists. It is a descent of God into the soul's zone of awareness. It is a visitation of force unexpected and unpredictable. It is a voice spoken out of cosmic silence - It is 'Cosmic Will which can perform authentic miracles under its own laws'."

In truth, God and the *Guru* are not different. Just as the prey which has fallen into the jaws of a tiger has no escape, so those who have come within the ambit of the *Guru's* gracious look will be saved by the *Guru* and will not get lost; yet, each one should by his own effort pursue the path shown by God or *Guru* and gain release.

Each seeker after God should be allowed to go his own way, the way for which he alone may be built (meant). It will not do to convert him to another path by violence. The Guru will go with the disciple in his own path and then gradually turn him onto the Supreme path at the ripe moment. Suppose a car is going at top speed. To stop it at once or to turn it at once would be attended with disastrous consequences.

VIII

within. Such a Guru is needed generally, though not for very rare and advanced souls.

One can go to another Guru after one's Guru passes away. But after all, Gurus are one, as none of them are the form. Mental contact is always the best.

Sat Sang means association with *Sat* or Reality. One who knows or has realized *Sat* is also regarded as *Sat*. Such association is absolutely necessary for all. Sankara has said, "In all the three worlds there is no boat like *sat sang* to carry one safely across the ocean of births and deaths."

Guru not being physical, His contact will continue after His form vanishes. If one *Jnani* exists in the world, His influence will be felt by or benefit all people in the world, and not simply His immediate disciples. As described in *Vedanta Chudamani*, all the people in the world can be put under four categories: The Guru's disciples, *bhaktas*, those who are indifferent to Him and those who are hostile to Him. All these will be benefited by the existence of the *Jnani* - each in his own way and to various degrees.

From the book, *Divine Grace Through Total Self-Surrender* by D. C. Desai, Bhagavan read out the following quotations by Paul Brunton for our benefit:

"Divine Grace is a manifestation of the cosmic free will in operation. It can alter the course of events in a mysterious manner through its own unknown laws, which are superior to all natural laws, and can modify the latter by interaction. It is the most powerful force in the universe.

"It descends and acts only when it is invoked by total

The real is as it is, ever. How to realize it? All that is required is this: We have realized the unreal, *i.e.*, regarded as Real what is unreal. We have to give up this attitude. That is all that is required for us to attain *Jnana*. We are not creating anything new or achieving something which we did not have before. The illustration given in the books is this: We dig a well and create a huge pit. The *akasa* (space) in the pit or well has not been created by us. We have just removed the earth which was filling the *akasa* there. The *akasa* was there, then, and is also there now. Similarly we have simply to throw out all the age-long *samskaras* (innate tendencies) which are inside us. When all of them have been given up, the Self will shine alone.

Effortless and choiceless awareness is our Real State. If we can attain It or be in It, it is all right. But one cannot reach It without effort, the effort of deliberate meditation. All the age-long *vasanas* (latent tendencies) carry the mind outwards and turn it to external objects. All such thoughts have to be given up and the mind turned inward. For most people effort is necessary. Of course, everybody, every book says Cm>ma-yIR (*summa iru* - be quiet or still). But it is not easy. That is why all this effort is necessary. Even if you find one who has effortlessly achieved the *mouna* (silence) or Supreme State indicated by Cm>mayIR, you may take it that the effort necessary has already been completed in a previous life. Such effortless and choiceless awareness is reached only after deliberate meditation.

The books no doubt speak of *sravana* (hearing), *manana* (reflection), *nididhyasana* (one-pointed concentration),

SELF-REALIZATION

The state we call realization is simply being oneself, not knowing anything or becoming anything. If one has realized, he is That which alone *is*, and which alone has always been. He cannot describe that state. He can only be That. Of course we loosely talk of Self-realization for want of a better term.

That which *is*, is peace. All that we need do is to keep quiet. Peace is our real nature. We spoil it. What is required is that we cease to spoil it. For instance, there is space in a hall (room). We are not going to create space anew. We fill up the place with various articles. If we want space, all that we need do is to remove all those articles and we get space. Similarly, if we remove all the rubbish from the mind the peace will become manifest. That which is obstructing the peace must be removed. Peace is the only Reality.

Mukti or Liberation is our Nature. It is another name for us. Our wanting *mukti* is a very funny thing. It is like a man who is in the shade voluntarily leaving the shade, going into the sun, feeling the severity of the heat, making great efforts to get back into the shade, and then rejoicing 'At last I have reached the shade, how sweet is the shade!' We are doing exactly the same. We are not different from the Reality. We imagine we are different, *i.e.*, we create the *bheda bhava* (the feeling of difference) and then undergo great *sadhanas* to get rid of the *bheda bhava* and realize the oneness. Why imagine or create the *bheda bhava* and then destroy it?

It is false to speak of realization. What is there to realize?

free from thought, it is *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. When through practice we are always in that state, not going into *samadhi* and coming out again, that is the *sahaja* (natural) state. In *sahaja* one always sees oneself. He sees the *jagat* (world) as *swarupa* (Reality) or *Brahmakara* (form of Brahman). Eventually, what was once the means becomes itself the goal, whatever method one follows. *Dhyana* (meditation), *jnana, bhakti* and *samadhi* are all names for ourselves, for our Real State.

Knowing one's Self is only being one's Self, as there is no second existence. This is Self-realization.

You may go on reading any number of books on Vedanta. They can only tell you 'Realize the Self'. The Self cannot be found in books. You have to find it for yourself in yourself.

The Lord whose home is the interior of the Heart-Lotus is extolled as the Lord of the Cave. If by force of practise the feeling 'I am He, I am the Lord of the Cave' (*Guhesa*) becomes firmly established, as firmly as your present notion that you are the ego is established in the body, and thus you stand forth as the Lord of the Cave, the illusion that you are the perishable body will vanish like darkness before the rising sun.

The true *karma*, yoga, *bhakti* or *jnana* consists in finding out who it is that does the *karma*, or seeks reunion through yoga, or feels separation from his Lord, or is in ignorance. All these do not exist without the 'I'. So to remain as the 'I' is the Truth.

If we regard ourselves as the doers of action we shall also be the enjoyers of the fruits of such action. If by enquiring who does these actions one realizes one's Self, the sense that one *samadhi* and *sakshatkara* (Realization). We are always the *sakshat* (Real) and what is there for one to attain after that? We call this world *sakshat* or *pratyaksha* (directly present). What is changing, what appears and disappears, what is not *sakshat*, we regard as *sakshat*. We *are* always, and nothing can be more directly present than we, and about that we say we have to attain *sakshatkaram* after all these *sadhanas*. Nothing can be more strange than this. The Self is not attained by doing anything other than remaining still and being as we are.

We say that what we see with the eyes alone is *pratyaksha*. There must first be the seer before anything could be seen. You are yourself the eye that sees, An>tmIlak>k] (*andhamila kann*) the 'Infinite Eye' referred to in *Ulladu Narpadu (Reality in Forty Verses)*.

People are afraid that when the ego or the mind is killed, the result may be a mere blank and not happiness. What really happens is that the thinker, the object of thought and thinking all merge into the one Source, which is Consciousness and Bliss itself, and thus that state is neither inert nor blank. I do not understand why people should be afraid of that state in which all thoughts cease to exist and the mind is killed. Every day they experience that state in sleep. There is no mind or thought in sleep. Yet when one rises from sleep one says, 'I slept happily.' Sleep is so dear to everyone that no one, prince or beggar, can do without it.

When we have *vikalpas* (false concepts) and are trying to give them up, *i.e.* when we are still not perfected, but have to make conscious effort to keep the mind one-pointed or

There is no knowledge apart from ignorance, and no ignorance apart from knowledge. That alone is *jnana* or real knowledge, which when enquiring to whom this knowledge or ignorance arises, reaches that Source which is the Self.

The thought 'I am the body' is ignorance. That the body is not apart from the Self is knowledge. The body is a mental projection. The mind is the ego, and the ego rises from the Self. The body thought is distracting and strays away from the Self. For whom is the body or birth? Not for the Self, the Spirit. It is for the non-self which imagines itself separate from the Self.

So long as there is the sense of separation there will be afflicting thoughts. If the original source is regained and the sense of separation ends, there is peace. A stone picked up from its place and thrown up into the sky has no rest till it comes back to earth. The waters of the sea evaporating and rising into the sky as clouds find no rest till they come back as rain, and finally rush back to the sea. The ego can have peace only when it merges back into its Source, the Self.

Seeing God in any form and speaking to Him is as real as your own reality. In other words, when you identify yourself with the body in the waking state, you see gross objects; when in the subtle body (the mental plane) as in dream, you see objects equally subtle; in the absence of all identification, as in dreamless sleep, you see nothing. The objects seen, bear a is the doer vanishes and with it all the three kinds of *karma* (*viz*. *sanchita, agamya* and *prarabdha**). This is the state of eternal *Mukti* or Liberation.

Our Real Nature is *Mukti*. But we imagine that we are bound and are making strenuous attempts to become free, while we are all the time free. This will be understood only when we reach that stage. We will be surprised that we were frantically trying to attain something which we have always been and are. An illustration will make this clear: A man goes to sleep in this hall. He dreams he has gone on a world tour, is roaming over hill and dale, forest and country, desert and sea, across various continents and, after many years of weary and strenuous travel, returns to this country, reaches Tiruvannamalai, enters the Asramam and walks into the hall. Just at that moment he wakes up and finds he has not moved an inch, but was sleeping where he lay down. He has not returned to the hall after great efforts, but is and always has been in the hall. It is exactly like that. If it is asked, why being free we imagine we are bound, I answer, 'Why being in the hall did you imagine you were on a world adventure, crossing hill and dale, desert and sea?' It is all mind or *maya*.

The dyads or the pairs of opposites, such as pleasure and pain, and the triads, or such differences as the knower, the known, and the process of knowing, depend on one thing - the ego. When one seeks for that thing in the Heart and finds out its Real Nature they will vanish. Those alone who have found out the Real Nature of the ego have seen the Reality. They will have no more doubts or anxieties.

* The three kinds of karmas are: prarabdha, being that portion of one's past karma to be worked out in the present body; sanchita being the outstanding balance of past karma, and agamya being the karma that will bear fruit in future births.

that is realized, effort is necessary. After tasting such bliss even once, one will repeatedly try to regain it. Having once experienced the bliss of peace, no one would like to be out of it or engage himself otherwise. It is as difficult for a *Jnani* to engage in thoughts, as it is for an *ajnani* to be free from thought.

Any kind of activity does not affect a *Jnani*. He remains ever in eternal peace.

Ishta Devata (deity of one's choice) and *Guru* are aids, very powerful aids on this path. But for an aid to be effective requires your effort also. Your effort is a *sine qua non*. It is you who should see the sun. Can spectacles and the sun see for you? You yourself have to see your True Nature. Not much aid is required for doing it.

First one sees the Self as objects, then one sees the Self as void, and then one sees the Self as the Self; only in this last case is there no seeing because seeing is becoming.

The more we control thought, activity and food, the more we will be able to control sleep. But moderation ought to be the rule for the *sadhak* (aspirant), as explained in the *Gita*. As explained in the *Gita*, sleep is the first obstacle for all *sadhakas*. The second obstacle is said to be *vikshepa*, or the sense objects of the world which divert one's attention. The third is said to be *kashaya* or thoughts about previous experiences with sense objects. The fourth, *ananda* (bliss), is also called an obstacle, because in that state a feeling of separation from the source of *ananda*, enabling the enjoyer to say, 'I am enjoying *ananda*,' is present. Even this has to be surmounted, and the final stage of relation to the state of the seer. The same applies to visions of gods. By long practice, the figure of God as meditated upon appears in dream and may later appear even in the waking state.

There was a saint by the name Nam Dev. He could see, talk and play with Vithoba, the God of Pandharpur. God had to teach him that that was not enough, and one must press on further and realize the Self where seer and seen are one.

Vision of Siva: Vision is always of an object. That implies the existence of a subject. The value of the vision is the same as that of the seer. The nature of the vision is on the same plane as that of the seer. Appearance implies disappearance as well. Whatever appears must also disappear. A vision can never be eternal. But Siva is eternal.

Viswarupa darsana (vision of the cosmic form) and *Viswatma darsana* (vision of the universal self) are the same. Such *darsana* is not by eyesight or in any gross fashion. As there is only Being, without a second, anything seen cannot be real. That is the truth.

The moral behind the story of Ashtavakra and Janaka is simply this: The disciple surrenders himself to the Master. That means there is no vestige of individuality retained by the disciple. If the surrender is complete, all sense of individuality is lost and there is no cause for misery. The Eternal Self is only happiness and that is revealed.

The whole of Vedanta is contained in the two Biblical statements 'I am that I am' and 'Be still and know that I am God'.

There is a state beyond our efforts or effortlessness. Until

samadhana or *samadhi* has to be reached, where one becomes *ananda*, or One with the Reality, and the duality of enjoyer and enjoyment ceases in the ocean of *Satchidananda* (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss) or the Self.

The power of a *Jnani's* Self-Realization is more powerful than all occult powers. To the *Jnani* there are no others. But what is the highest benefit that can be conferred on 'others' as we call them? It is happiness. Happiness is born of peace. Peace can reign only when there is no disturbance by thought. When the mind has been annihilated, there will be perfect peace. As there is no mind, the *Jnani* cannot be aware of others. But the mere fact of His Self-Realization is itself enough to make all others peaceful and happy.

The following extract from a letter of the poet Tennyson to B. P. Blood was read out in Bhagavan's presence: '… a kind of waking trance I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has generally come upon me through repeating my own name two or three times to myself, silently, till all at once, as it were out of the intensity of consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being; and this not a confused state but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, the weirdest of the weirdest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction but the only true life'.

Bhagavan said, 'That state is called abidance in the Self.'

IX

HEART

In the centre of the cavity of the Heart the sole Brahman

mirror in which all these are mere reflections? What is the heart of all souls or creatures in this universe?' Vasishta replied: 'All creatures in this universe have two kinds of hearts - one to be taken note of and the other ignored. Hear their respective traits: The one to be ignored is the physical organ called the heart which is situated in the chest as a part of the measurable body. The one to be taken note of is the Heart which is of the nature of consciousness. It is both inside and outside (us) and has neither an inside nor an outside.'

This is the really important Heart. It is the mirror which holds all reflections. It is the basis and source of all objects and all kinds of wealth. Therefore, it is only that Consciousness, which is the Heart of all, not that organ - a small part of the body, which is insentient like a stone, and perishable. So one can achieve the eradication of all desires and control of breath, by practice of merging the mind in the Heart, which is Pure Consciousness.

Concentrating one's thoughts solely on the Self will lead to happiness or bliss. Drawing in the thoughts, restraining them and preventing them from going outwards is called *vairagya*. Fixing them in the Self is *sadhana* or *abhyasa* (practice). Concentrating on the Heart is the same as concentrating on the Self. The Heart is another name for the Self.

The Self is the Heart. The Heart is Self-luminous. Light arises from the Heart and reaches the brain which is the seat of the mind. The world is seen with the mind, that is by the reflected light of the Self. It is perceived with the aid of the mind. When the mind is illumined it is aware of the world. shines by itself as the *Atman* (Self) in the feeling of 'I-I'. Reach the Heart by diving within yourself, either with control of breath, or with thought concentrated on the quest of the Self. You will thus get fixed in the Self.

I have been saying all along that the Heart Centre is on the right side, even when learned men differed from me. I speak from experience. I knew it even in my home during my trances (*samadhi*). Again during the incident recorded in *Self-Realization*, I had a very clear vision and experience. All of a sudden a light came from one side erasing the world-vision. I felt that the heart on the left had stopped and the body became blue and inert. Vasudeva Sastri embraced the body and wept over my death, but I could not speak. All the time I was feeling that the Heart Centre on the right was working as well as ever. This state lasted fifteen or twenty minutes. Then suddenly something shot out from the right to the left like a rocket bursting into the sky. The blood resumed circulation and the normal condition of the body was restored.

The entire universe is condensed in the body and the entire body in the Heart. Thus the Heart is the nucleus of the whole universe. This world is not other than the mind, the mind is not other than the Heart; that is the whole truth.

The source is a point without any dimensions. It expands as the cosmos on the one hand and as Infinite bliss on the other. That point is the pivot. From it a single *vasana* starts and expands as the experiencer ('I'), the experience and the experienced (the world).

To Rama who questioned Vasishta: 'Which is that big

in the scheme of *Moksha* (liberation)?' Bhagavan said, 'Why do you think you are a *grihastha*? If you go out as a *sannyasi* (ascetic), a similar thought that you are a *sannyasi* will haunt you. Whether you continue in the household or renounce it and go to the forest, your mind goes with you. The ego is the source of all thought. It creates the body and the world and makes you think you are a *grihastha*. If you renounce the world it will only substitute the thought *sannyasi* for *grihastha*, and the environments of the forest for those of the household. But the mental obstacles will still be there. They even increase in the new surroundings. There is no help in a change of environment. The obstacle is the mind. It must be got over whether at home or in the forest. If you can do it in the forest, why not at home? Therefore, why change your environment? Your efforts can be made even now - in whatever environment you are now. The environment will never change according to your desire'.

If objects have an independent existence, *i.e.*, if they exist anywhere apart from you, then it may be possible for you to go away from them. But they do not exist apart from you; they owe their existence to you, your thoughts. So where can you go to escape them?

Where can you go, fleeing from the world or objects? They are like the shadow of man, which the man cannot flee from. There is a funny story of a man who wanted to bury his shadow. He dug a deep pit, and seeing his shadow at the bottom, was glad he could bury it so deep. He went on filling the pit, and when he had completely filled it up, he was surprised and disappointed to find the shadow on the top. Even When it is not itself so illumined, it is not aware of the world. If the mind is turned inward towards the source of light, objective knowledge ceases and the Self alone shines forth as the Heart.

The moon shines by the reflected light of the sun. When the sun has set, the moon is useful for revealing objects. When the sun has risen, no one needs the moon, although the pale disc of the moon is still visible in the sky. So it is with the mind and the Heart.

X

RENUNCIATION

When asked: 'How does a *grihastha* (householder) fare

that, or whether he gives up his duties or not. All that happens according to destiny.

All the activities that the body is to go through are determined when it first comes into existence. It does not rest with you to accept or reject them. The only freedom you have is to turn your mind inward and renounce activities there. Nobody can say why that freedom alone and no other freedom is left to man. That is the Divine scheme.

Giving up activities means giving up attachment to activities or the fruits thereof, giving up the notion 'I am the doer'. The activities which this body is destined to perform will have to be gone through. There is no question of giving up such activities, whether one likes it or not.

If one remains fixed in the Self, the activities will still go on and their success will not be affected. One should not have the idea that one is the doer. The activities will still go on. That force, by whatever name you call it, which brought the body into existence will see to it that the activities which this body is meant to go through are brought about.

If the passions are something external to us, we can take arms and ammunition and conquer them. They all come from within us. If by looking into the source whence they come, we prevent their coming up and we shall conquer them. It is the world and the objects in it that arouse our passions. But the world and these objects are only created by our mind. They do not exist during our deep sleep.

The fact is that any amount of action can be performed, and performed quite well by the *Jnani*, without His identifying so, the objects or thoughts of them will be always with you until you realize the Self.

Why should your occupation or duties in life interfere with your spiritual effort? For instance, there is a difference between your activities at home and in the office. In your office activities you are detached, and so long as you do your duty you do not care what happens, or whether it results in gain or loss to the employer. But your duties at home are performed with attachment and you are all the time anxious as to whether they will bring advantage or disadvantage to you and your family. It is possible to perform all the activities of life with detachment and regard only the Self as real. It is wrong to suppose that if one is fixed in the Self, one's duties in life will not be performed properly. It is like an actor. He dresses, acts and even feels the part he is playing, but he knows that he is really not that character but someone else in real life. In the same way, why should the body-consciousness or the feeling 'I am the body' disturb you once you know for certain that you are not the body but the Self. Nothing that the body does should shake you from abidance in the Self. Such abidance will never interfere with the proper and effective discharge of whatever duties the body has, any more than the actor's being aware of his real status in life interferes with his acting a part on the stage.

Renunciation is always in the mind, not in going to the forest or solitary places, or giving up one's duties. The main thing is to see that the mind does not turn outward but inward. It does not really rest with a man whether he goes to this place or

of past action; it concerns the body. Let the body act as may suit it. Why are you concerned about it? Why do you pay attention to it? Freewill and destiny last as long as the body lasts. But *jnana* transcends both. The Self is beyond knowledge and ignorance. Whatever happens, happens as the result of one's past actions, of divine will and of other factors.

There are only two ways to conquer destiny or be independent of it. One is to enquire for whom is this destiny, and discover that only the ego is bound by destiny and not the Self, and that the ego is non-existent.

The other way is to kill the ego by completely surrendering to the Lord, by realizing one's helplessness and saying all the time, 'Not I, but Thou Oh Lord' and giving up all sense of 'I' and 'mine', and leaving it to the Lord to do what he likes with you. Complete effacement of the ego is necessary to conquer destiny, whether you achieve this effacement through Self-enquiry or *bhakti marga* (path of devotion).

Everything is predetermined. But a man is always free not to identify himself with the body, and not to be affected by the pleasures or pains consequent on the body's activities.

Those alone who have no knowledge of the Source whence fate and freewill arise, will dispute which of them can conquer the other. Those who have realized their Self, which is the Source of both fate and freewill have left such disputes behind, and will have nothing more to do with them.

Success and failure are due to *prarabdha karma*, and not to willpower or the lack of it. One should try to gain equipoise of mind under all circumstances. That is willpower.

Himself with it in any way, or ever imagining that He is the doer. Some power acts through His body and uses His body to get the work done.

XI

FATE AND FREEWILL

Freewill and destiny are ever existent. Destiny is the result

and now. It is immaterial to Him as to how, where and when He leaves the body. Some *Jnanis* may appear to suffer, others may be in *samadhi*; still others may disappear from sight before death. But that makes no difference to their *jnana*. Such suffering is only apparent, seeming real to the onlooker, but not felt by the *Jnani*, for He has already transcended the mistaken identity of the Self with the body.

The *Jnani* does not think He is the body. He does not even see the body. He sees only the Self in the body. If the body is not there, but only the Self, the question of its disappearing in any form does not arise.

In books, it is mentioned that the greatest malady we have is the body, the pvenay> (*bhava-noy* - disease of birth), and if one takes medicine to strengthen and prolong its life, it is like a man taking medicine to perpetuate his disease. A Sanskrit verse in Canto XI of the *Bhagavata* says the body is not real (impermanent). Whether it is at rest, or moves about, and whether by reason of *prarabdha* it clings to Him or falls off from Him, the Self-Realized *Siddha* is not aware of it, even as the drunken man blinded by intoxication is unaware whether his cloth is on his body or not.

Illustrations are given in the books as to how a *Jnani* who is in the *sahaja* state and who always sees only the Self, can move about and live in the world like everyone else. For instance, you see a reflection in the mirror, you know the mirror to be the reality and the picture in it a mere reflection. In order to see the mirror, is it necessary that one should cease to see the reflection in it?

XII

JNANI

A *Jnani* has attained Liberation even while alive, here

in the affairs of the world without any detriment to yourself. Freeing yourself from all sorts of bonds, maintaining the same equanimity and doing work externally in conformity with the environment in which you find yourself, disport yourself as you like in the world.

He whose mind is not attached to any desires, does no action in reality, though his body may act. He is like one who is hearing a story with his mind elsewhere. Similarly, the man whose mind is full of desires is really acting though his body may be actionless. A man may be sleeping here with his body inert, and yet he may be climbing hills and falling from them in dream at the same time.

It is all the same to one who is fast asleep in a cart, whether the cart moves or stops, with the bulls left yoked or unyoked. Similarly for the *Jnani* who has gone to sleep in the cart of His physical body, it does not matter whether He works or is in deep meditation (*samadhi*), or is asleep.

The statement that the *Jnani* retains *prarabdha* while free from *sanchita and agamya karmas** is only a formal answer to the questions of the ignorant. Of several wives none escapes widowhood when the husband dies; even so, when the doer goes all three *karmas* vanish.

The non-action of the Sage is really unceasing activity. His characteristic is eternal and intense activity. His stillness is like the apparent stillness of a very fast-rotating top. Its extreme speed cannot be followed by the eye and so it appears to be still. This must be explained, as people generally mistake the

Or again take the screen illustration: There is a screen. On that screen first appears the figure of a king. He sits on a throne. Then before him in that same screen a play begins with various figures and objects and the king on the screen watches the play on the same screen. The seer and the seen are mere shadows on the screen, which is the only reality supporting these pictures. In the world also, the seer and the seen together constitute the mind and the mind is supported by, or based on, the Self.

You are under the impression you are the body. So you think the *Jnani* also has a body. Does the *Jnani* say He has a body? He may look to you as having a body and doing things with the body as others do. The burnt rope still looks like a rope but it cannot serve as a rope if you try to bind anything with it. As long as one identifies oneself with the body, all of this is difficult to understand.

Examine all the different kinds of states. Take hold of that State which alone is the Supreme and True One and engage yourself in action in the world, regarding your life there as mere sport. You have discovered That which is the Reality inside your Heart behind all the appearances of this world. So, without ever letting That out of your sight, disport yourself as you like in the world. Seeming to have enthusiasm and gratification, anxieties and aversions (but really having none of them), seeming to begin and persevere in endeavours (but really having no attachment to such efforts), engage yourself

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* See note on page 31 for the meanings of these three karmas

you identify one body with Bhagavan and another body with yourself, you find two separate entities and speak of going away from here. Wherever you may be, you cannot leave me.

Sri Ramakrishna is said to have seen life in the image of Kali that he worshipped. That life was perceived by him, not by all. The vital force was due to himself. It was his own vital force which manifested as if it were outside and drew him in. Were the image really alive it must have appeared so to all. On the other hand, everything is full of life. That is the fact. Many devotees have had experiences similar to Sri Ramakrishna.

Christ is the ego and the Cross, the body. When the ego is crucified and it perishes, what survives is the Absolute Being (God); *cf.*., 'I and my Father are one.' This glorious survival is called the Resurrection. God the Father represents *Isvara*, the Son is the *Guru*, and the Holy Ghost is the *Atman*.

The Bible says, 'Be still and know that I am God,' Psalm 46. Found in the Ecclesiastics: 'There is one alone and there is no second' and 'The wise man's heart is at the right hand and a fool's heart is at the left'.

No thought will go in vain. Every thought will produce its effect sometime or other. Thought force will never go in vain.

Some have maintained that the body can be made immortal and they give recipes, medical or other, for perfecting this body and making it defy death. The Siddha School (as it is known in the South) has believed in such a doctrine. Venkasami Rao in Kumbakonam started a school which believed the same. There is a society in Pondichery too. There is also the school which believes in transforming men into supermen by descent

stillness of the Sage for inertness.

XIII

MISCELLANEOUS

No one can be out of sight of the Supreme Presence. Since

entangled in the affairs of others. Giving to others is really giving to oneself. If one knows this truth, would one ever remain without giving?

If ego rises, all will rise. If the ego merges, all will merge. The more we are humble, the better it is for us.

The best and most potent *diksha* (initiation) is by silence, which was practised by Lord Dakshinamurti. Those by touch, look, etc. are of a lower order. *Mouna* can change all hearts.

Bhagavan, when asked by a devotee whether he should continue taking the name of God as advised by his late Guru, or change over to *vichara* (enquiry), referred the devotee to an article in *Vision* of September 1937, on the 'Philosophy of the Divine Name according to Saint Nam Dev', in which it is explained that God and God's Name are all the same.

The sun illumines the universe, whereas the Sun of Arunachala is so dazzling, that in It the universe is not seen; there remains only an unbroken brilliance.

It is not true that birth as a man is necessarily the highest, that one must attain Self-Realization while only being a man. Even an animal can attain Self-Realization.

There is no need for anyone to start reforming the country or the nation before reforming himself. Each man's first duty is to realize his True Nature. If after doing this he feels like reforming the country or nation, by all means let him take up such reform. Swami Ram Tirtha advertised: 'Wanted Reformers - but reformers who will reform themselves first'. No two persons in the world can be alike or can act alike. External differences are bound to persist, however hard we of Divine Power. But all the people, after writing long treatises on the indestructibility of their bodies, after giving medical and yogic recipes to perfect the body and keep it alive forever, pass away one day.

Name of God and God are not different. The Bible also has it: 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.'

In the name Rama, 'Ra' stands for the Self, and 'ma' for the ego. As one goes on repeating 'Rama', 'Rama', the 'ma' disappears, getting merged in the 'Ra' and then 'Ra' alone remains. In that state there is no conscious effort at *dhyana*, but *dhyana* is always there, for *dhyana* is our real nature.

The yogi may be definitely aiming at rousing the *Kundalini* (the Serpent-power) and sending it up the *sushumna* (yogic nerve). The *Jnani* may not have this as His object, but both achieve the same result, that of sending the life-force up the *sushumna* and severing the *chitjadagranthi* (the knot binding the sentient and the inert). *Kundalini* is another name for *Atma* or Self, or *Sakti*. We talk of it as being inside the body because we conceive ourselves as limited to the body. But it is in reality both inside and outside, being no other than the Self, or *Sakti*. In the *jnana marga*, when by Self-enquiry the mind is merged in the Self, the Self, its *Sakti* or *Kundalini* rises automatically.

If peace of mind is true *Mukti* or Liberation, how can those whose minds are set on *siddhis* (miraculous powers), which cannot be attained except with the help and activity of the mind, attain *Mukti*, where all turmoil of the mind ceases?

Avoid desire and aversion. Do not engage the mind much in the affairs of the world. As far as possible do not get

may try to eliminate them. The only solution is for each man to realize his True Nature.

The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* says '*Aham*' is the first name of God. The first letter in Sanskrit is 'A' and the last letter 'Ha' and 'Aha' thus includes everything from the beginning to the end. The word *Ayam* means That which exists, self-shining and self-evident. *Ayam, Atma, Aham* all refer to the same thing. In the Bible also, 'I AM' is given as the first name of God.

If we concentrate on any thought and go to sleep in that state, immediately on waking up the same thought will continue in our minds. People who are given chloroform are asked to count one, two, etc. A man who goes under after saying six, for instance, will, when he comes round again, start saying seven, eight, etc.

When I laid down with limbs outstretched and mentally enacted the death scene, and realized that the body would be taken and cremated and yet I would live, some force, call it *atmic* power or anything else, rose within me and took possession of me. With that I was reborn and I became a new man. I became indifferent to everything afterwards, having neither likes nor dislikes.

From silence came thought, from thought the ego, and from ego speech. So, if speech is effective, how much more so must be its source?

Karpura arathi (burning camphor before God) is symbolic of burning away the mind by the light of illumination. *Vibhuti* (sacred ash) is Siva (Absolute Being) and *kumkum* (vermillion powder) is *Sakti* (consciousness) .

The *puranas* speak of this Hill (Arunachala) as being hollow, with cities and streets inside it. I have also seen such things in visions. The books speak of the Heart as a cavity. But penetration into it proves it to be an expanse of light. Similarly the Hill is one of light. The caves, etc. are covered up with that light.

The means prescribed for securing the spiritual end, such as charity, penance, sacrifice, *dharma* (virtuous conduct), yoga, *bhakti* (devotion) and the end itself described variously as Heaven, the Supreme Object, Peace, Truth, Grace, the Quiescent State, Deathless Death, True Knowledge, renunciation, *Moksha* (Liberation) and Bliss are all nothing but being free from the obsession that the body is the Self.

Give up regarding yourself as this despicable body and realize your Real Nature, which is one of Eternal Bliss. Seeking to know thyself while still anxious about the welfare of the body, is like attempting to cross a stream with the aid of a crocodile for a raft.

Not desiring the non-Self is dispassion (*vairagya*). Inhering in the Self is *Jnana*. Both are the same.